

Teacher- Mediated Classroom Strategies and Engagement of Learners with ADHD in Inclusive Education

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ABSTRACT

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most commonly identified neurodevelopmental conditions affecting school-age learners worldwide. Students with ADHD frequently encounter difficulties related to attention regulation, impulse control and sustained participation in classroom learning activities. Within inclusive education systems, teachers play a critical role in designing instructional environments that support the engagement and academic participation of these learners. This review paper synthesizes existing literature on classroom practices that enhance engagement among learners with ADHD. Drawing on empirical studies, policy documents and theoretical frameworks related to inclusive education, the review highlights effective instructional strategies, behavioural management approaches and classroom structuring techniques that facilitate meaningful participation. The findings indicate that differentiated instruction, multimodal teaching strategies, structured classroom routines and positive behavioural reinforcement significantly contribute to improved engagement and learning outcomes. The review also identifies key challenges faced by teachers, particularly within developing educational contexts such as India, including limited professional training, large class sizes and insufficient institutional support. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of teacher preparedness, inclusive pedagogical frameworks and context-specific policy interventions in strengthening engagement of learners with ADHD.

KEYWORDS: ADHD, Inclusive Education, Classroom Engagement, Teacher Strategies, Educational Interventions

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has gained increasing recognition as a fundamental component of equitable educational systems. Contemporary educational frameworks emphasize the integration of learners with diverse abilities into mainstream classrooms while ensuring that instructional practices accommodate varied learning needs. This shift reflects a broader commitment to educational equity, accessibility and participation for all students. Among the diverse learner populations present in inclusive classrooms, students diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) require particular pedagogical consideration. ADHD is characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity that may interfere with learning processes and classroom participation. These behavioral and cognitive characteristics can influence students' ability to concentrate, organize tasks, regulate behavior and complete academic assignments effectively. In classroom environments that rely heavily on sustained attention and structured routines, learners with ADHD may experience difficulties maintaining engagement. These challenges often lead to decreased academic achievement, behavioral disruptions and reduced participation in learning activities. Consequently, educators must adopt adaptive instructional strategies that address the diverse

cognitive and behavioral profiles of students with ADHD.

Research in educational psychology increasingly highlights the role of teacher practices in shaping classroom engagement for learners with ADHD. Effective teaching strategies such as differentiated instruction, scaffolded learning, behavioral reinforcement and multisensory teaching approaches have been identified as important tools in supporting attention regulation and task participation. This review paper aims to synthesize existing research on teacher-mediated practices that enhance classroom engagement among learners with ADHD. By examining current literature, the study seeks to identify key instructional strategies, highlight challenges faced by educators and provide insights that can inform teacher training programs and inclusive education policies.

Conceptual Understanding of ADHD in Educational Settings

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is widely recognized as a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects cognitive processes related to attention regulation, executive functioning and behavioral control. In educational contexts, ADHD often manifests through observable behaviors such as difficulty maintaining focus, excessive movement, impulsive responses and challenges in task completion. Executive functioning deficits associated with ADHD significantly influence learning processes. These deficits may include limitations in working memory, difficulties in organizing information and challenges in planning and monitoring tasks. As a result, students with ADHD may struggle with completing assignments, following multi-step instructions and sustaining engagement during classroom instruction. From a pedagogical perspective, ADHD should not be viewed solely as an individual deficit but rather as a condition influenced by the interaction between the learner and the educational environment. Classroom structures, teaching methods and teacher expectations play an important role in either facilitating or hindering learner engagement.

Classroom Engagement and Its Dimensions

Classroom engagement refers to the degree to which learners actively participate in educational activities and invest effort in the learning process. Educational researchers commonly conceptualize engagement as a multidimensional construct consisting of behavioral, emotional and cognitive components. Behavioral engagement relates to observable participation in classroom activities, such as completing assignments, contributing to discussions and following classroom instructions. Emotional engagement reflects learners' feelings toward learning, including interest, motivation and sense of belonging within the classroom environment. Cognitive engagement involves the level of mental effort students invest in understanding concepts and solving problems. For learners with ADHD, maintaining engagement across these dimensions can be particularly challenging due to attentional and behavioral regulation difficulties. Consequently, instructional strategies that promote active participation, provide structured guidance and offer varied learning experiences are essential for supporting engagement.

METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present review aims to synthesize existing scholarly literature on teacher-mediated classroom practices and their influence on the engagement of learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in inclusive educational environments. With the increasing emphasis on inclusive education, understanding how instructional strategies affect the participation and learning behavior of students with ADHD has become a critical concern for educators and

policymakers.

The review is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine existing research on instructional strategies used by teachers to support learners with ADHD in inclusive classrooms.
2. To analyze patterns of learner engagement, attention, and classroom participation reported in previous studies.
3. To identify effective teacher-mediated interventions that enhance academic engagement among learners with ADHD.
4. To explore challenges faced by educators while implementing inclusive practices for students with ADHD.
5. To synthesize current evidence and highlight gaps in the literature to inform future research and pedagogical practices.

The study adopts a qualitative systematic literature review approach to analyze and synthesize existing academic research on teacher-mediated classroom interventions and their impact on the engagement of learners with ADHD. A review-based approach is particularly appropriate for consolidating dispersed findings across multiple studies and providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Systematic reviews enable researchers to critically evaluate and integrate findings from diverse studies while ensuring transparency and methodological rigor (Snyder, 2019). The review process followed a structured procedure for identifying, selecting and analyzing relevant literature.

A comprehensive search of scholarly literature was conducted across major academic databases to identify relevant studies related to classroom management and instructional strategies for learners with ADHD. The databases include ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Google Scholar, Scopus-indexed journals. To ensure the relevance and quality of the reviewed literature, specific criteria were applied during the selection process. Studies included in the review met the following criteria such as studies focusing on school-aged learners diagnosed with ADHD, research conducted within school or classroom environments, examining teacher-mediated instructional practices, classroom management strategies or behavioral interventions, investigating student engagement, classroom behavior or academic participation outcomes.

The study selection process followed a structured procedure to ensure transparency and methodological rigor. Initially, the database search produced a large number of potentially relevant studies. Titles and abstracts were first screened to determine their relevance to the research objectives. Studies that met the preliminary screening criteria were then subjected to full-text review to assess their suitability for inclusion in the final analysis. During this stage, articles were evaluated based on their focus on classroom practices, relevance to inclusive education and the presence of findings related to ADHD learners. The selected studies provided insights into teacher practices, classroom engagement patterns and instructional interventions designed to support learners with ADHD.

Data Extraction and Analysis

The collected data were then analyzed using a qualitative analysis that identified patterns and recurring themes across studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this process, major themes related to classroom management strategies, engagement practices and behavioral support mechanisms were identified and synthesized.

The thematic synthesis enabled the identification of key instructional strategies such as multisensory teaching approaches, structured classroom routines, behavioral reinforcement techniques and differentiated instructional practices, which have been reported to enhance engagement and learning outcomes among students with ADHD in inclusive classroom settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across major academic databases, including ERIC, Google Scholar. The search process employed combinations of relevant keywords such as ADHD in inclusive classrooms, teacher-mediated interventions, student engagement and ADHD, inclusive education strategies, classroom management for ADHD learners. To maintain the relevance and quality of the review, specific selection criteria were applied. Studies were included in the review which focused on learners diagnosed with ADHD within school or classroom contexts, examined teacher strategies, instructional practices or classroom interventions, investigated student engagement, behavior or participation outcomes. Relevant studies were carefully examined and key information was extracted which included teacher intervention strategies, key findings related to learner engagement, limitations and recommendations.

ADHD and Classroom Learning Challenges

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders affecting school-aged children and is characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity that interfere with academic and social functioning. In classroom settings, learners with ADHD frequently demonstrate difficulty sustaining attention, following instructions, regulating behavior and completing tasks independently. These challenges often lead to off-task behavior, reduced academic engagement and disruptions within the classroom environment. Research indicates that children with ADHD tend to display higher levels of off-task behavior compared with typically developing peers across various classroom contexts, including group instruction, individual seatwork and classroom transitions. Such behavioral patterns can influence not only the learning outcomes of the affected students but also the overall classroom climate. Given these challenges, effective classroom management strategies play a critical role in supporting learners with ADHD and ensuring their successful inclusion within mainstream educational settings.

Classroom Management Strategies for Learners with ADHD

Classroom management strategies refer to the systematic practices teachers use to organize learning environments, regulate behavior and promote academic engagement. In inclusive classrooms, these strategies must address the diverse needs of learners, particularly those with attention and behavioral difficulties such as ADHD. Research consistently highlights that structured classroom interventions implemented by teachers can significantly reduce disruptive and off-task behaviors among students with ADHD. It is also found that teacher-implemented classroom interventions produced positive effects in decreasing disruptive behaviors and improving student engagement, particularly when behavioral and self-regulation strategies were applied. Classroom management strategies for learners with ADHD can broadly be categorized into several key approaches.

Behavioral Classroom Management

Behavioral classroom management is one of the most widely recommended approaches for supporting students with ADHD. This strategy focuses on reinforcing positive behaviors and reducing disruptive actions through structured systems such as rewards, praise and clear behavioral expectations. Behavioral interventions are considered evidence-based practices and have demonstrated effectiveness in improving classroom behavior and academic participation among students with ADHD. Teachers implementing behavioral management strategies often use techniques such as positive reinforcement, token reward systems and structured behavioral contracts to encourage appropriate classroom conduct. These approaches help students understand expected behaviors and motivate them to maintain focus during instructional activities.

Instructional and Organizational Strategies

Instructional adaptations are another important component of classroom management for learners with ADHD. These strategies aim to reduce cognitive overload and improve students' ability to process information. Research suggests that teachers can support ADHD learners by simplifying instructions, breaking tasks into smaller segments and repeating key instructions to ensure comprehension. Organizational strategies are also crucial because many learners with ADHD experience difficulties with planning, time management and task organization. Providing visual schedules, structured routines and clear step-by-step instructions can help students maintain focus and successfully complete classroom tasks.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is significant at theoretical, pedagogical and practical levels, as it offers meaningful insights into the educational experiences of learners with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) within inclusive classroom settings. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on ADHD by providing a context-specific exploration of classroom dynamics within natural school environments. Through qualitative inquiry, it offers deeper insights into how the behavioral and cognitive characteristics associated with ADHD are expressed in real classroom interactions. By examining the lived educational experiences of learners with ADHD, the study enhances understanding of the complex relationship between instructional practices, behavioral regulation and academic engagement. Such insights extend existing theoretical discussions on inclusive education and learner diversity. From a pedagogical standpoint, the study highlights classroom management and instructional strategies that facilitate both academic development and behavioral stability among students with ADHD. The findings provide practical, evidence-informed guidance for educators seeking to implement structured routines, differentiated instruction,

reinforcement techniques and individualized support mechanisms. By illustrating how teaching practices can be adapted to meet diverse developmental and cognitive needs, the study emphasizes the importance of flexible, responsive, and inclusive pedagogical approaches in contemporary classrooms. At a practical level, the study underscores the importance of strengthening teacher preparation and continuous professional development. By drawing attention to the role of informed classroom management and instructional adaptation, the research supports the need for teacher education programs that equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to address diverse learner profiles effectively. The insights generated may assist curriculum developers, school administrators, and policymakers in designing teacher training modules and institutional frameworks that promote inclusive educational practices. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive

education by emphasizing that equitable learning environments require context-sensitive and individualized approaches rather than standardized instructional methods. In doing so, it reinforces the development of inclusive pedagogical frameworks that support not only academic achievement but also the socio-emotional well-being of learners with ADHD.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study explored the school experiences of a learner with ADHD and examined the strategies teachers used to support their learning.

- ❑ The findings showed that ADHD learners consistently demonstrated difficulties with attention, organisation, task completion, sequencing and following instructions, as recorded through observations.
- ❑ The behavioural patterns highlighted in the charts used in data analysis further confirmed the presence of distractibility, impulsivity, restlessness and off-task behaviour across classroom activities.
- ❑ At the same time, the study showed that the learners responded positively to structured, scaffolded and visually supported teaching practices. Teachers frequently employed strategies such as clear instructions, visual aids, breaking tasks into smaller steps, structured routines and kinaesthetic learning activities, which enhanced the learner's engagement. The presence of expressive strengths in art and storytelling further indicated that the learner benefited from creative and multi-sensory opportunities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Theme: Engagement Strategies of ADHD learners in a classroom setting

The analysis of the reviewed literature and classroom-based evidence reveals that the engagement of learners with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in inclusive classroom settings is strongly influenced by the implementation of structured, multisensory and individualized instructional strategies. The thematic analysis identified several key engagement strategies, including movement-based interventions, multisensory instructional supports, structured task design, individualized behavioural planning and classroom organization practices. These strategies collectively contribute to improving attention, behavioural regulation and academic participation among learners with ADHD. One of the most prominent themes identified is the incorporation of movement-oriented strategies, such as short movement breaks and kinaesthetic activities. These approaches acknowledge the characteristic hyperactivity and restlessness associated with ADHD and provide opportunities for physical regulation during learning tasks. Previous research suggests that allowing controlled physical movement can enhance cognitive functioning and sustained attention in students with ADHD by reducing impulsivity and mental fatigue. Such findings highlight the importance of flexible classroom structures that accommodate the physiological and behavioural needs of learners rather than enforcing prolonged periods of passive sitting. Another significant finding relates to the use of multisensory instructional tools, including auditory aids, visual supports and colour coding techniques. These strategies facilitate improved cognitive processing by

engaging multiple sensory pathways simultaneously. Visual aids such as charts, diagrams and graphic organizers help simplify complex information, while auditory supports reinforce comprehension and retention of instructional content. Colour coding further assists learners in organizing and categorizing information efficiently. Existing literature indicates that multisensory learning environments are particularly effective for students with ADHD, as they help maintain attention and reduce cognitive overload. The analysis also emphasizes the importance of structured task design, particularly through breaking complex tasks into smaller, sequential steps and providing concept-based worksheets. ADHD learners often experience difficulties with executive functioning, including task initiation, planning, and completion. Step-by-step instructional frameworks reduce cognitive load and allow students to focus on one component of the task at a time, thereby promoting gradual achievement of learning objectives. Similarly, concept-based worksheets support differentiated instruction by enabling teachers to tailor learning materials according to individual learner needs and cognitive readiness. In addition to instructional strategies, behavioural support mechanisms emerged as a crucial component in enhancing classroom engagement. The implementation of individualized behaviour plans allows teachers to address specific behavioural challenges while reinforcing positive learning behaviours. Resources such as ADHD-focused educational materials and behaviour-management frameworks provide teachers with practical guidance for supporting students with attention-related challenges. These approaches align with inclusive education principles, which emphasize the need for personalized support systems within mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, classroom organization and environmental management were identified as important factors influencing learner engagement. Strategies such as strategic seating arrangements, clear instructions, and consistent classroom routines help minimize distractions and provide predictability within the learning environment. Structured routines are particularly beneficial for learners with ADHD, as they help establish clear expectations and reduce uncertainty during instructional activities. Another critical theme identified in the analysis is the role of time management strategies in supporting the development of executive functioning skills among ADHD learners. Allocating specific time frames for tasks and providing reminders or visual timers assist learners in organizing their work and maintaining focus. Such strategies promote self-regulation and help students manage academic responsibilities more effectively. Collectively, the findings indicate that effective engagement of ADHD learners requires a holistic pedagogical approach that integrates instructional flexibility, behavioural support, and classroom structure. Rather than relying on a single intervention, successful classroom practices combine multiple strategies tailored to the cognitive and behavioural characteristics of learners with ADHD. These findings reinforce the importance of inclusive pedagogical frameworks that prioritize individualized learning supports, multisensory teaching methods and adaptive classroom management strategies. Overall, the review highlights that teacher-mediated interventions play a critical role in shaping the educational experiences of students with ADHD. By adopting evidence-based instructional practices and fostering supportive classroom environments, educators can significantly enhance academic engagement, behavioural regulation and overall learning outcomes for students with ADHD in inclusive educational settings.

Theme: Different patterns of behaviours displayed by the ADHD learners

The thematic analysis of classroom observations revealed several recurring behavioral patterns among learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) that influence their engagement and participation in classroom activities. These patterns reflect well-documented

characteristics of ADHD related to attention regulation, impulse control and executive functioning, which collectively affect learners' academic performance and classroom behavior. One of the most frequently observed challenges was difficulty in completing classwork independently. Learners often required additional guidance, reminders and structured support from teachers to complete assigned tasks. This difficulty may be attributed to deficits in sustained attention and working memory, which limit learners' ability to follow multi-step instructions and maintain focus until task completion. Similar findings have been reported in earlier studies highlighting that learners with ADHD benefit from structured scaffolding and continuous teacher mediation during academic tasks. Another prominent theme emerging from the analysis was heightened distractibility. Learners displayed reduced attention spans and were easily influenced by environmental stimuli such as classroom noise, peer interaction or visual distractions. This distractibility frequently led to interruptions in learning processes and difficulty

maintaining continuous engagement with instructional activities. The findings support previous research indicating that environmental factors significantly affect the attentional regulation of learners with ADHD. The analysis also identified impulsivity as a recurring behavioural trait. Learners often responded without reflection, interrupted peers or teachers and exhibited difficulty adhering to established classroom norms. Such behaviours reflect challenges in inhibitory control, a core feature of ADHD, which affects learners' ability to regulate their responses in structured learning environments. In addition, off-task behaviour was frequently observed during routine classroom activities. Learners struggled to maintain sustained engagement and often shifted their attention away from the assigned task. This behaviour was particularly evident during activities requiring prolonged concentration or independent work. Off-task behaviour can significantly hinder academic progress, as it reduces the amount of time learners actively engage with instructional material. Another significant observation was the need for repeated instructions. Teachers frequently had to restate directions or provide step-by-step clarification to ensure task comprehension and completion. This requirement reflects challenges in attention retention and processing of verbal instructions, which are commonly associated with ADHD-related executive functioning deficits. Furthermore, learners exhibited difficulty organizing materials and academic tasks. Problems such as misplacing materials, incomplete sequencing of tasks and disorganized workspaces were frequently observed. These organizational difficulties reflect limitations in executive functioning, particularly in planning, time management and task prioritization. Overall, the findings indicate that ADHD-related behavioural patterns significantly influence learners' classroom engagement and participation. The observed challenges emphasize the need for structured pedagogical strategies, including clear instructions, task scaffolding, behavioural supports and adaptive classroom environments to support learners with ADHD in inclusive educational settings. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions can enhance learners' academic engagement and promote more effective participation in classroom learning processes.

Theme: Occurrence of ADHD learners in a classroom setting

The thematic analysis of classroom observations revealed several recurring behavioral characteristics among learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), highlighting their influence on classroom participation and instructional dynamics. The findings indicate that ADHD-related behaviors are consistently manifested within everyday classroom interactions and significantly affect both individual learning engagement and overall classroom management. One of the most prominent patterns observed was constant movement within the classroom. Learners frequently exhibited difficulty maintaining a seated posture for extended

periods and engaged in continuous physical activity such as shifting positions, walking around the classroom or fidgeting. This persistent motor activity reflects the hyperactive dimension of ADHD and indicates challenges in behavioral self-regulation. Such movement patterns often reduced learners' ability to remain consistently engaged in instructional tasks. Another notable theme emerging from the analysis was classroom disruptions. Due to challenges in sustaining attention and regulating impulses, learners occasionally engaged in behaviors that interrupted ongoing classroom activities. These disruptions included talking out of turn, shifting attention away from instructional tasks and interacting with peers during lesson time. Such behaviors not only affected the learning process of the individual learner but also influenced the classroom environment and the learning experiences of other students. The analysis also highlighted hyperactivity as a defining behavioral characteristic. Learners demonstrated excessive motor activity, restlessness and an observable sense of internal drive often described as being "driven by a motor." This heightened activity level reflects core symptoms associated with ADHD and contributes to difficulties in maintaining sustained focus during structured academic tasks. Hyperactivity therefore presents a significant challenge for teachers attempting to maintain orderly classroom routines and effective instructional delivery. Additionally, inattention and disorientation were frequently observed during classroom instruction. Learners often struggled to process and retain verbal instructions, leading to confusion or incomplete task execution. As a result, teachers were required to repeat directions and provide additional reinforcement to ensure task comprehension. This pattern indicates underlying difficulties in attention regulation and working memory, which are commonly associated with ADHD and can affect learners' ability to follow sequential instructions and remain engaged in classroom activities. Collectively, these findings suggest that ADHD-related behaviors are deeply embedded in classroom interactions and significantly influence learning engagement and classroom dynamics. The presence of hyperactivity, distractibility and instructional processing difficulties underscores the need for structured and inclusive pedagogical strategies. Implementing approaches such as clear instructions, repeated reinforcement, movement opportunities and supportive classroom management techniques can help accommodate the learning needs of students with ADHD and foster a more inclusive educational environment.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the school experiences of a learner diagnosed with ADHD and critically analyzed the instructional strategies adopted by teachers to support their academic engagement. Classroom observations revealed persistent challenges in core executive functioning domains, including sustained attention, organization, task initiation and completion, sequencing of tasks and adherence to multi-step instructions. These difficulties were consistently documented across literacy, general classroom and transition activities. The behavioral trends reflected in the findings further substantiated patterns of distractibility, impulsivity, motor restlessness, and frequent off-task behavior. Such behaviors were not isolated incidents but occurred across varied instructional contexts, suggesting that the learner's challenges were closely linked to attentional regulation and self-management rather than lack of ability or motivation. Importantly, the findings also highlighted the learner's responsiveness to structured pedagogical interventions. When teachers implemented clearly defined routines, provided concise and stepwise instructions, incorporated visual supports and scaffolded complex tasks into manageable segments, noticeable improvements in engagement and task persistence were observed. Kinesthetic learning opportunities and hands-on activities further enhanced participation, indicating the learner's preference for active and experiential modes of learning. Additionally, the learner demonstrated expressive strengths in creative domains such as art and

storytelling. These strengths suggest that multi-sensory and creative instructional approaches can serve as effective entry points for academic engagement and confidence-building. Leveraging such strengths may not only improve participation but also foster a more positive self-concept in learners with ADHD.

Overall, the study concludes that while ADHD-related behavioral characteristics can present significant challenges to sustained academic performance, targeted instructional planning and intentional classroom structuring can substantially mitigate these difficulties. The findings underscore the critical role of teacher awareness, consistent routines, scaffolded instruction and inclusive pedagogical design in promoting meaningful participation and academic progress for learners with ADHD

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